like that, but I never acknowledge that I get on as well without it.

Mrs. Bancroft told me that the production would be as beautiful as money and thought could make it. The artistic side of the venture was to be in the hands of Mr. Godwin, who had designed rny dress for Titania at Bristol.

" Well, what do you say ? " said Mrs. Bancroft. " Will you put your shoulder to the wheel with us ? "

I answered incoherently and joyfully, that of all things I had been wanting most to play in Shakespeare; that in Shakespeare I had always felt I would play for half the salary; that—oh, I don't know what I said! Probably it was all very foolish and unbusinesslike, but the engagement was practically settled before Mrs. Bancroft left the house, although I was charged not to say anything about it yet.

But theatre secrets are generally *secrets de polichmelle.* When I went to Charles Reade's house at Albert Gate on the following Sunday for one of his regular Sunday parties, he came up to me at once with a knowing look and said :

" So you've got an engagement."

" I'm not to say anything about it "

" It's in Shakespeare ! "

"I'm not to tdl."

" But I know. I've been thinking it out. It's ' The Merchant of Venice.[1] "

" Nothing is settled yet. It's on the cards."

" I know ! I know! " said wise old Charles. " Well, you'll never have such a good part as Philippa Chester! "

" No, Nelly, never ! " said Mrs. Seymour, who happened to overhear this. " They call Philippa a

Rosalind part. Rosalind! Rosalind is not to be compared with it! '*

Between Mrs. Seymour and Charles Reade existed a friendship of that rare sort about which it is easy for people